

*How to Pray
Effectual
Prayers*

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HOW TO PRAY

EFFECTUAL PRAYERS

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"The effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man availeth much."
James 5: 16.

- (1) "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11: 1.
- (2) A Sense of God's Holiness.
- (3) Repentance and Humility.
- (4) Faith in God's Mercy and Promises.
- (5) The Lord has Taught us How to Pray.
- (6) Diligence in Prayer: Greater Blessings.
- (7) The Manner of Praying.
- (8) "Shut thy Door." Matt. 6: 6.
- (9) "Fervent" Prayers. James 5: 16.
- (10) Spend More Time in Prayer: "Let Every Breath be a Prayer."
- (11) Open Channels to Riches.

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11

(1) "LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY." Luke 11: 1.

Millions of people of various religions believe in and practice saying prayers to an unseen Deity. Various schemes have been devised whereby the God or gods worshipped might be pleased, appeased or placated, and thus bestow favours upon the worshippers. In some instances "prayer-wheels" have been utilized—in this way the more quickly the wheel is turned the more times the prayers are offered to the god worshipped. Prayers written on papers have been tied to tree tops so that they would flutter in the breeze. Many and varied ways have been employed by believers of false teachings in their endeavours to appease their false gods. Our Lord instructs us: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." Matt. 6: 7, 8.

In the spiritual contest upon Mt. Carmel we see illustrated the "vain repetitions" employed by the "heathen." "The prophets of Baal" "called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered." I Kings 18: 19-26. For another instance of the use of "vain repetitions" see Acts 19: 35. The frenzied repetitions of the prophets of Baal were unanswered. However, the Scriptures plainly teach that there are many prayers of professing followers of the true God that are not answered. "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." Isa. 1: 15. "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee." Jer. 7: 16. "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." Prov. 1: 28.

Man needs to be taught how to pray.

(2) A SENSE OF GOD'S HOLINESS.

In teaching us how to pray the Lord Jesus says: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, *Hallowed be Thy name.*" The first recorded words ever spoken by our Master were: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2: 49. His last words before returning to heaven after His resurrection were: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father." John 20: 17. Jesus taught us to regard God as a loving Father in Whom we are to repose a complete, childlike trust. He taught us to address God as "Our Father." As Jesus was God's Representative to man we know that the eternal God desires us to address Him as "Our Father." When spoken to Him in earnest

prayer it is as sweet music in His ears. By the very words with which Jesus taught us to commence our prayers He indicates that our approach to God should be one of trust and confidence; that God knows all about us as children of His, and that He loves us and desires to bless us. No slavish fear will haunt the soul. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us." 1 John 4: 18, 19. A spirit of filial devotion should be cultivated. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1: 3.

However, while it is our unspeakable privilege to enjoy that "fellowship," which Jesus indicated by the words "Our Father," He also instructs us to reverence God's name: "Hallowed by Thy name." No finite being can possibly have an adequate grasp of the majesty of the Person of the Father, and it is certain that no one has yet been able to comprehend fully the faultless perfection of the ways of God or His immaculate holiness. A number of Bible writers have endeavoured to convey to our minds visions they have had of the throne and Person of God, but in their descriptions one is conscious that they failed through limited human powers to present the unmeasured glories of the omnipotent God. Finite minds cannot describe the indescribable. Often in pray or in speech people refer to an "Almighty God" without stopping to consider the fulness of the words they employ. Isaiah the prophet had a vision of God in His sublime majesty, power and purity, and what he beheld so gloriously contrasted with his human weakness that he cried out: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isa. 6: 1-5. A very deep sense of God's holiness must possess him who would pray effective prayers.

(3) *REPENTANCE AND HUMILITY.*

A true sense of God's holiness causes a sense of humility to fill the soul. How utterly worthless the best efforts of sinful mortals to reach the standard of holiness required by God. He who comes to God in prayer need not expect rewards to be given for acts of righteousness performed. God has a heaven full of blessing for those who seek His face with reverence and godly fear, having a keen sense of one's own unworthiness. "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him." Ps. 89: 6. The sinless and mighty angels of heaven veil their faces as they bend in adoration before the matchless might and majesty of God, saying "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." Isa. 6: 1-3; Rev. 4: 8. How much more

should sinful mortals have a just appreciation of the mercy of God in permitting, yes, welcoming, repentant sinners to approach Him and to talk to Him? "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Hab. 1: 13. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." Isa. 59: 1, 2. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Ps. 66: 18. "He that turneth away His ear from hearing the law, even His prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28: 9.

While sin is so terribly heinous to God and every violation of His holy Law very offensive to Him, He has promised to dwell with the repentant sinner: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 58: 15. He who serves God aright will feel that the very best that is offered Him in service is not good enough. See Isa. 66: 2, 3. The contrite prodigal son said to His Father, "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son." Luke 15: 19, 21. The prodigal's warm welcome home to the Father's house was enhanced by his recognition of his unworthiness, and by the confession of his wrongs. The loving Father bestowed lavish gifts upon His repentant son. The blessings of God will continue to be bestowed upon any child of God so long as that same repentant, tender spirit is manifested. Pride is particularly offensive to God. Throughout the Scriptures this fact is made known. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4: 6.

Jesus "spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. . . . And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 18: 1, 9-14. The proud Pharisee who trusted in himself for righteousness employed the personal pronoun "I" five times—the same number as is reported of the proud Lucifer in the steps which led to his rebellion. See Isa. 14: 12-14. In contrast to the proud Pharisee whose prayer did not reach heaven (Jesus significantly said that he "prayed thus *with himself*"), we find men whom God dearly loved making confession of their sins before

asking for answers to their requests. Daniel was thrice called "O man greatly beloved." See Dan. 9: 23; 10: 11, 18. Though no sin of Daniel's is recorded in the Bible, notice how he commenced his prayer: "And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments; *we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments.*" Dan. 9: 4, 5. God says: "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." Jer. 3: 13. An adequate confession of sin to God must precede an effective prayer. There must be an acknowledgment of God's holiness and of one's own unworthiness.

(4) FAITH IN GOD'S MERCY AND PROMISES.

The gracious promise is positively given: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9. Faith in God's mercy must precede power in prayer. Throughout His Word, God has repeatedly stated His willingness, yes, His delight in being merciful. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because *He delighteth in mercy.*" Micah 7: 18. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and *plenteous in mercy.*" Ps. 103: 8. When the Lord proclaimed His character to Moses He said: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Ex. 34: 6, 7. The Lord finds pleasure in those who trust in His Word and His character. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9: 23, 24. It is our privilege to read or quote these words to the Lord in our prayers for mercy and blessing. As an expression of our faith in the justice of God we can remind the Lord of His gracious words in Rom. 3: 24-26: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." When, in prayer, God's children claim the fulfilment of His promises He accepts with pleasure the

reverent reminder of His Word. He desires us to build our hopes, our faith upon His pledged Word.

“ ’Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise;
Just to know, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ ”

To illustrate how men boast of being true to their word, the following example is presented:

A Perfect Refuge.

The son of a chieftain of the MacGregors was killed in a scuffle at an inn on the Moors of Glenorchy by a young gentleman named Lamont. The manslayer mounted his horse and, though sharply pursued, in the darkness of the night he succeeded in reaching a house. It happened to be the house of MacGregor himself.

“Save my life!” cried Lamont to the chieftain. “Men are after me to take it away.”

“Whoever you are,” replied MacGregor, “while you are under my roof you are safe.”

The pursuers arrived.

“Has a stranger entered your house?”

“He has; and what may be your business with him?”

“That man has killed your son. Give him up to our vengeance.”

This terrible news filled the house with lamentation; but the chief, with streaming tears, said: “No; you cannot have the youth, for he has MacGregor’s word for safety; and as God lives, while he is in my house he shall stay secure!”

This story has been told for centuries to illustrate Highland honour. What shall we say of the honour of God? Is not the honour of God at stake in the fulfilment of His promises? Does He not place such stress upon the reliability of His Word? See Isa. 55: 11; Matt. 24: 35, etc. Remember: “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.” 1 John 5: 10. The Lord desires us to stand upon His promises and encourages us to remind Him of them. He says: “Put Me in remembrance.” Isa. 43: 26. Therefore we have God’s invitation in our prayers to quote and read from His Word the “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these [we] might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Pet. 1: 4.

Faith in God’s promises forms the foundation of confident praying. In full reliance upon the work of the Saviour as our “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous” (1 John 2: 1), believing that “He is able also to save them to uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7: 25), “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 4: 16. In Heb. 6: 13-19 we are

informed that God, in order to give His children confidence in the certainty of the fulfilment of His Word, confirmed His promise by an oath. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. . . . For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Heb. 6: 13-20. Thus we are assured of every promise God has made. "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." 2 Cor. 1: 20. One devout Christian has written: "God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfilment of His promises. . . . Having asked according to His Word, we should believe His promise, and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied. . . . God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bible in your hands say, I have done as Thou hast said. I present Thy promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' . . . With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised." Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 145-149. Across the meadows of time comes ringing the inspired assurance: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the *faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations.*" Deut. 7: 9.

(5) *THE LORD HAS TAUGHT US HOW TO PRAY.*

In His infinite wisdom and mercy the Lord has given us words to employ in our prayers. He has urged us to remind Him of His promises, which he pledges to fulfill. In Hosea 14: 2 we are told what words to employ in prayer: "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips . . . for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy." In Jer. 14: 20, 21 we read: "We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against Thee. Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory: remember, break not Thy covenant with us." There is no need of prayer books, for there are many examples of inspired prayers given in Scripture. The Lord's prayer reduces to a few words the essential elements of effectual prayers. It will be observed that the

Lord teaches us to *pray about the things of God before we pray concerning our own affairs*. "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." Those who pray having the glory of God in mind will meet with the Divine approval, and the principle holds good in relation to prayer: "But *seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" Matt. 6: 33. The author of the booklet, "Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing," says: "The first half of the prayer Jesus has taught us, is in regard to the name and kingdom and will of God,—that His name may be honoured, His kingdom established, His will performed. When you have thus made God's service your first interest, you may ask with confidence that your own needs may be supplied. If you have renounced self, and given yourself to Christ, you are a member of the family of God, and everything in the Father's house is for you." p. 162.

(6) *DILIGENCE IN PRAYER: GREATER BLESSINGS.*

God desires to stimulate our diligence in seeking His blessing. He knows that our spiritual strength depends upon our diligence in prayer. Inspiration declares: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that *diligently seek Him.*" Heb. 11: 6. It is not enough to "seek Him," but we must "*diligently seek Him.*" Having received a measure of blessing from God we are privileged to go deeper into divine things. The water of life emerges from God's temple in a crystal-clear flow. The prophet Ezekiel describes it thus: "The waters were to the *ankles.*" Afterwards "the waters were to the *knees,*" then "to the *loins.*" "Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a *river that I could not pass over:* for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a *river that could not be passed over.*" Ezek. 47: 1-5. Wherever this river went it brought forth life, and even the leaves of the trees adorning its banks were fadeless and health-giving. This symbolizes the deepening, enlivening, fruitful experiences of those who continue to "*follow on to know the Lord.*" Hos. 6: 3. We are to "*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" 2 Pet. 3: 18. With experience, our knowledge of the Lord increases, our faith grows stronger, we wax bolder in prayer. He adds to our blessings until we receive a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit. We are to *plead* for the Holy Spirit. The Lord urges us to pray for the Holy Spirit: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask Him.*" Luke 11: 13. By comparing this passage of Scripture with Matt. 7: 11 we see that "good things" are mentioned instead of the "Holy Spirit." Thus we see that all other things—*all the blessings of God*—come with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Lord

urges us to pray and to keep praying for more and more of the Holy Spirit. God grants us a measure of the Holy Spirit according to our willingness to obey Him. "The Holy Ghost Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Acts 5: 32. The secret of effective praying is found in 1 John 3: 22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, *because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*" How many things that affect our daily living—eating, drinking, reading, conversation, pleasures, etc.—come under that expression "those things that are *pleasing in His sight.*" The Christian writer referred to above has also written, "All His gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfilment of His promises." Christ's Object Lessons, p. 145. "We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure that will hinder the outworking of His righteousness in our character and life." "Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing," pp. 139-148.

To those who keep His Commandments the Lord promises: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My Commandments." John 14: 13-15. "Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me *with all your heart.*" Jer. 29: 12, 13. "No man can serve two masters." "No one can occupy a neutral position. There is no middle class, who neither love God nor serve the enemy of righteousness. . . . He who does not give himself wholly to God is under the contrôl of another power. . . . Half and half service places the human agent on the side of the enemy as a successful ally of the hosts of darkness. . . . Make Him first and last in everything."

(7) THE MANNER OF PRAYING.

Solomon (2 Chron. 6: 13), Daniel (Dan. 6: 10), Jesus (Luke 22:41), and others mentioned in the Scriptures, knelt down to pray. However, in other postures acceptable prayers were offered to God. See Neh. 1: 4; 2: 1-4; 1 Kings 18: 42; Ps. 63: 6; Jonah 2:1, 2, 7; Matt. 26: 39; 27: 46; etc. A sincere prayer is heard by God no matter where or how it is offered. However, for general use, kneeling in prayer *inculcates reverence and suggests the hopelessness of the suppliant, without Divine help.*

(8) "SHUT THY DOOR." Matt. 6: 6.

While God delights to receive the unuttered prayer of His children in the busy, crowded throngs, yet for power and success in the prayer life Jesus teaches us: "When thou prayest enter into

thy closet, and *when* thou hast *shut thy door*, pray to thy Father which is in secret." Matt. 6: 6. "Shut thy door" to be alone with God. "Shut thy door" to avoid distractions, to shut out the things of this world and to concentrate on the prayer. "Shut thy door" because as you pray you will be drawn nearer to God, and as you daily practice praying, these talks with "Our Father" will grow sweeter and more familiar; you will converse with Him on all that concerns you, and your heart will often break "for the longing it has for God, for the living God." Earnest, pleading prayers are accompanied by weeping. See the Lord's instruction in Joel 2: 12, 17. Not only will flow tears shed in penitence (Ps. 6: 8; 69: 10; Joel 2: 12, 17) but tears of joy as the soul is thrilled with the knowledge of the presence of the Lord.

O the pure delight of a single hour
That before Thy throne I spend,
When I kneel in pray'r, and with Thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend.

Of repentant Jacob we read: "He had *power with God . . . he wept*, and made supplication unto Him." Hosea 12: 3- 4.

In Heb. 5: 7, margin, we read of Jesus' earthly life: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with *strong crying and tears* unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His piety." With the door shut and in the privacy of the place of prayer the longing soul reaches out after God, and in the earnestness of the supplication the movings of emotion and concentration causes one at times to raise the hands appealingly to God. Paul says: "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, *lifting up holy hands*, without wrath and doubting." 1 Tim. 2: 8. The Psalmist prayed: "Lord, I cry unto Thee. . . . Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and *the lifting up of my hands* as the evening sacrifice." Ps. 141: 1, 2. "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto Thee, *when I lift up my hands* toward Thy holy oracle." Ps. 28: 2. A practical illustration of the lifting up of the hands in earnest prayer is seen in the experience of Moses in the conflict with the enemies of Israel. "Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, *when Moses held up his hand*, that Israel prevailed: and *when he let down his hand*, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur *stayed up his hands*, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." Ex. 17: 10-13. Thus the Lord has emphasized the important fact that the battle with the enemy of righteousness is lost or won by whether or not we earnestly reach out after the living God, Who alone can help us be victors.

(9) *FERVENT PRAYERS.* James 5: 16.

We should remember that it is "the effectual *fervent* prayer of a righteous man" that "availeth much." James 5: 16. James cites Elijah as an illustration of "*fervent* prayer," saying, "and he prayed *earnestly*." V.17. If we desire God to answer our prayers we must supplicate Him, *plead* with Him, and *cry* unto Him. How often we read of Bible saints *crying* unto the Lord, and of the Lord answering their cry. "Thou heardest their *cry* by the Red Sea." Neh. 9:9. "I *cried* to my God . . . and my cry did enter into His ears." 2 Sam. 22: 7. "O Lord, attend unto my *cry*." Ps. 17: 1. "This poor man *cried*, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. . . . The righteous cry and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Ps. 34: 6, 15, 17. "For He shall deliver the needy *when he crieth*." Ps. 72: 12. "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses." Ps. 107: 19. "And when the children of Israel *cried* unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer." Judges 3: 9, 15; 4: 3; 6: 7; 10: 10; etc. "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?" Luke 18: 7. Scores of such verses are found in the Scriptures, and from them we learn that whenever people prayed a prayer that meant a lot to them, and from a burdened heart sought the Lord He heard the prayers. These were not formal prayers couched in poetical phrases designed to impress God with human piety, or saying nice things to God; they were the expression of *need*, and the greatest appeal that can be made to God is our utter need, our complete dependence upon Him. The human heart still retains in some degree the image and likeness to God, and numbers of people immediately respond to the cry of the weak and the helpless. Effectual praying is not saying one's prayers, but of presenting one's needs to Him Whose heart is touched when we throw ourselves helpless at His footstool of grace. "None of them that *trust in Him* shall be desolate." Ps. 34: 22. It is by His sovereign grace that we are able to pray to Him; only through His great mercy in bringing about the great plan of redemption centred in His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that we have access to the riches of His grace. Therefore, we must approach Him in the spirit that recognizes this fact. When we recognize that without His love and mercy we are lost and that everything we receive from Him is the manifestation of His goodness, we may be sure that we shall be blessed because "we trust in Him."

In the Lord's parable on the two men who prayed, the Pharisee paraded his own righteousness before God, and met with no response from the Lord, but the publican confessed his own unworthiness and threw himself upon the mercy of God. See Luke 18: 10-14. The recognition of the utter destitution of the human heart, apart from the working of God's Spirit in the soul, is a prerequisite to effectual praying. "Help of the helpless, O abide with

me." A cry for Divine aid from a soul in need is never unanswered. It is possible for a cry to go forth from the heart without being audible to the human ear. While such silent crying unto God is heard by the Lord, yet the Scriptures often refer to audible crying unto God. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice." Ps. 55: 17. "He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice." Acts 7: 60. "They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord." Rev. 6: 10. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death." Heb. 5: 7. Quoting again from the little booklet referred to earlier, we read: "The disciples had been for a short time absent from their Lord, when on their return they found Him absorbed in communion with God. Seeming unconscious of their presence, He continued *praying aloud*." "Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing," p. 151.

The prayers that mean much to us will mean something to God. Cold, indifferent praying is a prolific source of unanswered prayer. Notice the intensity in the apostle's request for prayers on his behalf. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye *strive* together with me in your prayers to God for me." Rom. 15: 30. "Always *labouring* [margin, *striving*] *fervently* for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect in all the will of God." Col. 4: 12. The church needs to be awakened to the greater importance of effectual prayers. Addressing His church, God says: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion. . . . Shake thyself . . . arise." Isa. 52: 1, 2. The gospel prophet, Isaiah, describes the days prior to the second advent of our Lord, and declares that, in comparison with the urgency of the need and the greatness of the hour, the church is asleep as to its tremendous responsibilities and privileges. He says: "And there is none that calleth upon Thy name, that *stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee*." Isa. 64: 7. God calls upon His people to bestir themselves and to awaken out of the lethargical stupor Satan has cast about them. As in the garden of Gethsemane, there is a very real danger of Christ's disciples being heavy with indolence and slumber while the Lord is wrestling with the powers of darkness. A terrific spiritual conflict is now raging and our attitude now will determine whether or not we shall enjoy the unmeasured bliss and joy of eternal life. To the sluggish disciples who failed to realize the gravity and solemnity of that fateful hour, and who could not grasp their own need, Jesus said: "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26: 40, 41.

Previously, in answer to His disciples' question, "Lord, are there few that be saved? He said unto them, *Strive* to enter in at the

strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13: 23, 24. In the original the word translated "strive" is that from which we obtain our English word "agonize." Our Lord informs us concerning those who receive the benefits of His kingdom. He says: "Until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11: 12. Indifferent praying produces little if any results, but the "*effectual fervent* prayer of a righteous man availeth *much*." A prayer life after God's desire that produces results requires time and effort.

(10) *SPEND MORE TIME IN PRAYER: "LET EVERY BREATH BE A PRAYER."*

A study of the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels reveals that Jesus sought His Father in prayer on every occasion. Every important act of His life was prefaced by a lengthy communion with God. "And in the morning, *rising up a great while before day*, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Mark 1: 35. "He went out into a mountain to pray, and *continued all night* in prayer to God." Luke 6: 12. "Jesus, when preparing for some great trial or some important work, would resort to the solitude of the mountains, and *spend the night in prayer* to His Father. A night of prayer preceded the ordination of the apostles and the sermon on the mount, the transfiguration, the agony of the judgment hall and the cross, and the resurrection glory." A deeply spiritual writer has declared that we "let go of the arm of the Lord too soon." If we would pray effectually we must take more time for prayer. Sin and vice of all kinds can be overcome if sufficient time and effort is devoted to prayer. Of a class of demons who could not be cast out by the disciples, the Lord said: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Matt. 17: 21. Using a mundane illustration we might observe that it takes time for a run-down battery to be re-charged with electricity. Daniel fasted three weeks in order to receive enlightenment concerning prophetic problems. Dan. 10: 2, 3. The disciples spent a number of days in searching the Scriptures, and in searching their hearts in prayer before God, before the mighty outpouring of power upon the day of Pentecost. See Acts 1 and 2. The three—Jesus, Moses and Elijah—who appeared to the disciples upon the mount of Transfiguration, where the mighty power of God was manifested, had each in their respective times spent 40 days and nights in fasting and praying. If we will but give God our time and our effort in prayer we, too, shall know that God bestows power upon those who search for Him with all their hearts. See Jer. 29: 12, 13; Acts 1: 8; etc. In a night of concentrated praying Jacob's character was changed. See Gen. 32: 24-28.

Concerning the effectiveness of our service for Christ one Christian writer has declared: "While we are to labour earnestly for the salvation of the lost, *we must take time* for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. Only the work accomplished with *much prayer*, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good." "The Desire of Ages," p. 362.

The apostle Paul instructs us: "Pray *without ceasing*" 1 Thess. 5: 17. "We must pray *always*, if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be '*instant in prayer*, and watch in the same with thanksgiving' (Rom. 12: 12; Col. 4: 2). Peter exhorts believers to be '*sober, and watch unto prayer*' (1 Pet. 4: 7). Paul directs '*In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*' (Phil. 4: 6). 'But ye, beloved,' says Jude, '*praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God*' (Jude 20, 21). *Unceasing prayer* is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life. . . .

"There is necessity for *diligence* in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. . . . Pray in your closet; and as you go about your daily labor, let your heart be often uplifted to God. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God. . . . In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God, and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are." "Steps to Christ," pp. 102, 103.

"Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor. Let the heart be *continually uplifted* in silent petition for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. *Let every breath be a prayer.*" "The Ministry of Healing," p. 511.

"But the mind must be constantly going out after God. . . . Then *pray always*, '*lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*' Urge your requests to the throne of grace, and rely upon God *hour by hour and moment by moment.*" Vol. 5, p. 410.

(11) OPEN CHANNELS TO RICHES.

A Christian life is one long prayer—a life of victory depends upon keeping the avenue of communion with God continually open. Men who have been mightily used of God have been those who prayed much and also had been successful in persuading others to pray for them and their work. God is not limited in resources,

and all in His bounteous heavenly treasure-house is for those who come to Him, claiming blessings in the name of His well-beloved Son. God is delighted with His Son, and Jesus has urged us to present our petitions in His name. "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." John 14: 13, 14. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4: 19. It is reported that when Alexander the Great rewarded a man for service rendered he told the man to go to the treasurer and collect whatever sum of money he desired. The treasurer objected to paying the amount sought and so complained to Alexander. Alexander instructed the treasurer to pay the amount, saying that the man had done him a great honour in regarding him as a very wealthy king and also of being very generous. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also *freely give us all things?*" Rom. 8:32. "God SO loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." God delights to give. He emptied all heaven in one gift—"His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). Concerning our Lord Jesus Christ Paul wrote: "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor; that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8: 9.

Paul often wrote about God's riches: "The riches of His grace"; "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"; "the exceeding riches of His grace"; "the unsearchable riches of Christ"; "the riches of His glory"; etc. See Ephes. 1: 7, 18; 2: 7; 3: 8, 16; etc. All these riches are for those who *continue* to ask. "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that *men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*" Luke 18: 1. After giving a parable illustrating the necessity of *perseverance* in prayer, Jesus said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Luke 11: 1-13.

A true story is told of some natives of South Africa who were with a party of tourists visiting the Niagara Falls. As the heaving, leaping, foaming waters fell in thunderous cascades over the mighty, broad precipice, they stood motionless in amazement. Eventually the guide touched them, saying that they would have to leave as there were other places to visit. "But," they in their simplicity protested, "we want to stay until it stops." No doubt that to them such mighty volumes of water could not go on much longer; the supply would surely run out! Even this poorly illustrates the glorious truth that to His needy, praying, trusting children from the boundless resources of omnipotence, there flows a ceaseless celestial tide of undiminishing grace and blessing from the Father through His beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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